

## **Introduction**

Paeon - A Song for the Forgotten (歡樂歌: 一首獻給被遺忘者的歌) is a fictional first person story-based walking simulator. Set in a universe parallel to modern-day Earth, the game incorporates supernatural occultism elements, as well as those based on Christianity and Chinese folklore, and happening mainly in the universe's rural China.

## **Plot**

In a timeline where war between large nations are happening incessantly, mysticism and underground research into the supernaturals have been backed and officiated by the Chinese government's efforts, establishing what became known colloquially as the Taboo Division. In an attempt to turn the table and usurp the dominance of western countries, the "Steeled Soldier" project, recruiting able-bodied men around the country as test subjects en masse, was held with the goal of borrowing the powers of higher beings, commonly referred to as "angels", through means of using the recruits' bodies as catalysts. The project succeeded, transforming essentially all those affected by the process into supersoldiers, bearing power and stamina beyond those of normal humans, and China was soon able to defeat invaders trampling on their ground, sweeping them in the span of a single day in what was called the "Light Wave" event. Before long, they overpower forces of other nations through excessive uses of violence, rising to become the reigning force and establishing a ruling system expanding nearly across the globe. Their reign, designated the "Peace Under One" Era, did not last, however, as approximately 7 months after the event, the supersoldiers started to develop symptoms of a peculiar, undiagnosable disease: patients start with signs alike that of a normal illness, which would have been highly impossible given their bodily status, such as fever, fatigue and headache, eventually devolving into abnormal occurrences i.e. constant emittance of high heat and radioactive particle surrounding the body, loss of consciousness, tendency of self-mutilation and flesh mutation in the span of 7 weeks. The government soon fell into a state of chaos as waves of patients were admitted into hospitals, effectively emptying out nationwide security and causing overloads, leading to welfare problems around various largest metropolises around the supernation. The victims would either be contaminated strictly or cremated out of fear of infection, although a week would

pass before the final outburst would happen, in what would eventually be known as the "Beginning of the End". Catalysts of the "angels," those who participated in the project were now in a zombified state, lungs flayed open to reveal a still-beating heart as they use deafening screeches to seek out their kin, violently smashing into each other, letting their bone and flesh crushes and melts into heaping mountains, before, emerging from them, massive creatures towering over buildings nicknamed "seraphs." Emitting lethal heat from their trifold "hearts," these living fortresses would hover high on the sky and raze the ground below with their "stinger", sword-like organs that can be controlled by these "seraphs" at will, while continuously vocalizing sounds "not unlike that of choirs, of human grieving, yet so profoundly alienating and disconcerting."

Set in the current period of 7 years after the outburst in what was coined the "Apocalypse," throughout most of the story, the player is in the role of the weary nameless protagonist, a small-time musician who managed to escape the initial searches of catalysts, wandering through scorched earth and ruins of cities to trace his way back to his hometown, a small and long abandoned village to "commit his final undoing." Growing up through thick and thin as an orphan alongside his brother, the man was fortunate enough to pursue a music career in the neighboring country, at which point he swore that he would never return again, leading to a conflict between the siblings and causing him to lose contact with his brother, after which the only time the two conversed was over the phone, when the latter suddenly called his brother abroad to announce that he would enlist in the program, unbeknownst of what it would bring. After the war settled following "Light Wave," the protagonist would try, to no avail, to seek out information regarding his brother, going so far as to return to the country he had once sworn off from going back. After the long years of desperation and the strafing "seraphs" atop the head, the man has grown despondent, using the last of his dying humanity to fulfill his final wish of unity. Along his ride home are meetings and partings, of new friends and old faces who will "all but set ablaze, doomed to die by cruel fate," as well as places and sites, some in ruination, some fortunate enough to last another day, as he reminds himself of his dreams and aspirations, of better days, and of the many folk tales and myths he and his brother has grown to be so familiar with, all interlaced with the scathing attacks from otherworldly beings above at unforeseeable intervals. Of those tales was the

myth surrounding the birth of an angel, the “Sevenfold Rejection of Emotions,” a seven-day duration before the death of a person in which, to attain divinity and ascend to a higher form, they had to discard the seven emotions, and with it, the seven corresponding malices, that is: Desire—Greed, Sorrow—Gluttony, Pleasure—Pride, Hatred—Envy, Anger—Wrath, Love—Lust, and Joy—Sloth, a story that the protagonist finds aptly resonating for the path he is walking, a path of ridding himself of worldly pleasure for the finale, the final baptism. As he reaches his end, standing before the road long been forsaken, he is surprised to find the place still untouched, by time and by the cruel flames of fate. Treading the path, he eventually ends up at the communal lake, reminiscing the last bits of the olden days as he sings a parting song for no one, before plunging to the forever depths.

### **Gameplay**

As a story-driven walking simulator, the player are tasked with the single goal of returning to “the end” while dodging strafes from the “seraphs” above, with some puzzle-solving elements included, most of which are for access to optional contents scattered around the trail and are not required for the ending. Player can interact with and examine objects, as well as mails and notebooks left from the fires, and can add certain objects to the inventory that can be used for special interactions with certain NPCs.

### **Inspiration**

Devotion (還願)	Red Candle Games
Iron Lung	David Szymanski